



Public Health  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

EXHIBIT 2  
DATE 2/16/2011  
HB 473

The Honorable David Howard, Chairman  
House Human Services Committee  
Montana House of Representatives  
PO Box 200400  
Helena, MT 59620-0400

RE: HB 473 – Public Health Sustainability

Dear Chairman Howard and Members of the House Human Services Committee:

On behalf of the Association of Montana Public Health Officials (AMPHO) which represents Montana local health departments of all sizes from very rural to the seven most populous in the state, I urge your support of HB 473 which seeks the continuation of a successful local public health project focusing on improving local public health infrastructure by advancing the quality and performance of local public health jurisdictions.

The quality and performance of local health departments will be realized through a key element of HB 473: the creation and implementation of a community health assessment which upon a community health improvement plan can be developed. Unfortunately, many local and tribal health departments do not have sufficient resources to assess the health of their communities nor do they have the resources to design and put into motion plans that improve the public's health. This bill provides an opportunity for the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services to assist local and tribal health departments with these activities.

Another key element of this legislation is your involvement in strengthening local public health via the public health improvement task force. HB 473 allows for balanced legislative representation in the process of building healthier, safer communities across the state because all Montanans, no matter where they live, should have a strong local public health system that advances health promotion and disease prevention interventions which improve and enhance quality of life.

This bill continues to build on the work that seven local health departments have been undertaking the past year and a half in getting ready for voluntary public health accreditation. The lessons learned from these local health departments provide the foundation for the new projects in this bill, and ultimately all Montana local public health jurisdictions, to develop a sustainable standards-based public health system.

I want to thank Representative Hendrick for his leadership on this important measure and thank you for your consideration.

Erin McGowan Fincham  
AMPHO Executive Director